

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Patent Appln. No. 10/816,191

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 presently are pending in the application. Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner has acknowledged the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, as well as receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

The Examiner has also returned an initialed copy of the modified PTO/SB/08, thereby indicating that he has considered the references listed thereon.

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract because the reference characters should be enclosed within parentheses. Applicant has deleted the reference characters from the Abstract.

With respect to the objection to the disclosure as set forth in paragraph Nos. 2 and 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification to address the Examiner's particular objections. Moreover, Applicant has made editorial changes to the specification and the claims as set forth in more detail below.

The Examiner's indication that claims 1-6 are allowed, and that claims 7 and 8 would be allowed if amended to address indefiniteness under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is greatly appreciated.

With respect to the rejection of claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, claims 7 and 8 have been amended in order to provide a proper antecedent basis for the recitations specifically pointed out by the Examiner. In this regard, note that in

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claim 7, the dependency has been changed to claim 2 in order to provide a proper antecedent basis for "the tip portions".

Moreover, although the Examiner has not rejected claims 1-6, Applicant has amended claims 1-4 in order to make editorial changes and clarify the claim language. The amendments to claims 1-4 were made merely to more accurately claim the present invention and do not narrow the literal scope of the claims and thus do not implicate an estoppel in the application of the doctrine of equivalents. The amendments to claims 1-4 were not made for reasons of patentability.

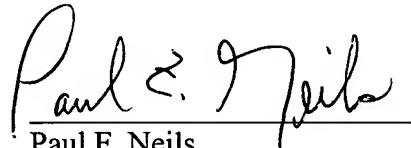
With respect to the drawings, since the original drawings filed appear to be facsimile copies, Applicant has submitted replacement drawings which are cleaner and crisper.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Since the original drawings filed appear to be facsimile copies, Applicant has submitted replacement drawings which are cleaner and crisper.

Attachment: 7 Replacement Sheets